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S P E E C H

OF

T. N. CRUMPLER,

OF ASHE,

ON FEDERAL RELATIONS,

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, JAN. 10, 1861.

RALEIGH:

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S P E E C H .

THE House being in Committee of the Whole upon the consideration of the Bill to call a Convention, and upon the Minority Report of the Committee on Federal Relations, Mr. Crumpler said :

MR. CHAIRMAN : In rising to address the Committee on the momentous questions under consideration, and to reply to the able and distinguished gentleman from New Hanover, (Mr. Person,) I am not unmindful of my want of experience in deliberative debate, nor of the disparity between the ability I can bring to the task and that of many gentlemen of this House ; but if, at this time, when dark clouds drive up from every quarter and shade the prospects of my country's peace and happiness in a twilight of terror, were I to remain silent, I should feel that I was untrue to myself, untrue to the loyal people whose representative I am, and untrue to the country. It would be idle, and worse than idle, to deny that the country is in a most perilous condition. Already the disruption of the Government is begun. One State has declared herself out of the Union ; others are threatening to make the same declaration. Even while I stand here speaking, they may have consummated their secession ordinances. A revolution seems to have commenced, and, as yet, no effectual barrier to its progress has been erected. In North Carolina, the same spirit which prompted the hasty action of those who have inaugurated this revolution is at work.

I propose briefly to examine the causes of the present condition of things—not with the purpose of saying that we should do nothing because this crisis has been precipitated upon us without just cause, but, if I can succeed in showing that the dangers which now menace the Government are the result of a deliberate plot to destroy the Union, I shall the more confi-

dently appeal to the patriotism of the country to arouse itself and put forth every exertion to defeat that plot, and save the Union.

Mr. Chairman, the present unhappy condition of the country is but the result of the programme laid down by the disunionists at Charleston, in the National Convention held there last spring. "These delegates went to Charleston to prevent a nomination, and to dissolve the Union." I am using the precise words of the Executive of our State. Conceiving that some better excuse for disunion than any which had yet arisen must be made before they could hope to arouse the passions of the Southern people and bind them to their policy, they set to work to bring that excuse into existence. They had, before this, declared that the election of any Republican to the Presidency would furnish a sufficient cause for a dissolution of the Union. The conservative masses, who act from the dictates of common sense and only take positions upon questions when they arise, not having said very much in opposition to this proposition of the disunionists, they supposed that they had succeeded in fixing this line of policy firmly upon the public mind of the South, and that if they could bring about the election of a Black Republican, their cherished object—a dissolution of the Union—could be effected. Full of these ideas, "they went to Charleston to prevent a nomination, and to dissolve the Union." About that time, His Excellency, Governor Ellis, made a prediction: He told us there would be differences in the Convention at Charleston; but there would be no disruption of the party. And he announced what he considered an established fact, that although the members of the party whose Convention it was, might differ, they never divided. I take it that His Excellency knew that party well—its feelings, its instincts, the moving springs of its organization and existence, and if there had been no other elements of disruption at Charleston than honest differences of opinion, his prediction would have been verified. With the proud history which that party had, with the memory of so many common triumphs, and with such fair hopes of the future, had there not existed something else which His Excellency, at the time he made his prediction, was unconscious of, some ground of adjustment would have been found. Had there been no dark plot behind the curtain; had not William L. Yan-

cey, with lighted torch and drawn dagger, stood ready to be the assassin of his country's peace, there would have been no disruption at Charleston. But the Convention met; the first act of the drama was played. To my great regret, expressed at the time, the National Democratic party, with whose unity the best hopes of the country were at that time intimately connected, was divided and broken up, thus rendering the election of a Republican probable. That result has been achieved, and these gentlemen now ask us to dissolve the Union for the causes which they themselves have been so active in bringing about.

But, Mr. Chairman, it must not be supposed that I hold the disunionists, even the disunionists *per se*, to be the only persons responsible for the evils that are upon us. There is another class—the Abolitionists of the North—who are primarily responsible and most guilty in this matter. With hearts full of treason to the spirit of the Constitution, they have, for years, been digging at the foundation of our Government. Filled themselves with all that is pestilent, they are, and have been, the leprous spot upon our body politic. Enemies of our country, they deserve execration. Their mischievous and wicked acts, while benefiting neither themselves or the objects of their hypocritical sympathies, have furnished the disunionists with the materials for their plot against the Union. It remains to be seen whether or not we are to become the victims of this plot. Are the people of North Carolina, whose representatives we are, prepared to carry out the disunion programme? I am satisfied that they are not. It is true that, at the beginning of the session, we had some manifestations of disunion sentiment from the towns and villages where combustible materials are most easily gathered and excitements most readily manufactured, but I knew that it was as the glare of the meteor which for a moment lights up the sky and attracts our gaze from the myriads of stars which hold their places and shine with beneficent light upon the earth. I knew that when the masses of the people waked up and spoke, when we heard from the plough-handles and axe-helves, we should hear a different language; and we are beginning to hear it in their remonstrances against being committed to disunion, which are daily laid before our body.

The gentleman from New Hanover told us that he intended to

be frank and fair in the statement of his position, and he redeemed that promise. He said that it was important that we should know each other. I concur with him in that statement. It is time we knew each other: and it is time the people knew us. I intend to express my opinions, without reserve, and I trust every gentleman upon this floor will imitate the candor and frankness of the gentleman from New Hanover, and let the people know where they stand.

It may not be amiss, Mr. Chairman, to recur to the position taken by all parties during the late Presidential canvass, in order that the Committee may contrast the different positions taken by members of this House now, with that position. I suppose it will hardly be denied that then we all told the people we were for the Union, and that the election of Lincoln was not to be considered a sufficient cause for its dissolution. The Bell party inscribed "Union" on all its banners. The Douglas party declared they would yield to none in their devotion to the Union. The Breckinridge party told us that better Union men than they were nowhere breathed. If there is a Bell man here who is for secession or disunion, I tell him he does not stand where his party stood when they were before the people. If there is a Douglas man here who favors disunion, I tell him he does not stand where his party stood in the late canvass. If there is a Breckinridge man upon this floor who is for disunion, I tell him he does not stand where his party did when they were before the people for votes. I could produce any amount of evidence in support of what I have said, but I shall trouble the Committee with only a little. I have here a pamphlet entitled, "Who are the Disunionists?" and marked "Breckinridge and Lane Campaign Document, No. 16," which was widely circulated in this State. The object of this document was to show that neither the members of that party or its candidates were disunionists. It quotes from Mr. Breckinridge's speech as follows:

"I am an American citizen—a Kentuckian, who never did an act or cherished a thought that was not full of devotion to the Constitution and the Union."

It has also the following passage from a speech of General Lane, which I will read:

"I have been influenced from early manhood to this moment by love of country; and I shall ever continue to be a patriot and a true friend of the

Constitution and the Union. Let no man ever say that there was any disunionism in the Convention which placed in nomination the gallant and gifted Kentuckian, and associated my name on the ticket, for no living man would go further to preserve this Union than I would; none would go further than John C. Breckinridge. *The Union must be preserved. It shall be preserved.*"

Mr. Chairman, if I may be pardoned for a slight digression, I must express my gratification that Mr. Breckinridge has maintained his position, that he is still battling with loyal zeal for the Union; that he stands with me and other conservative men in the fight we are making to preserve the Government.

But this document, not content with showing that its own party and candidates were for the Union, but knowing that love for this Union was the great chord in the popular heart of North Carolina, which must be rightly touched if they hoped to win, it goes further and charges that everybody else are disunionists, and that there was a plot among the Douglas and Bell men to break up the confederacy then existing, and establish several others. I call the attention of the committee to the concluding paragraph of this pamphlet. It reads as follows:

"These are ominous words. The plot is about being carried out. *A Western Confederacy, of which Mr. Douglas is to be the head!*

"A Southern Confederacy, of which Johnson, Bell, Soule, Clemens & Co. are to be the Chiefs!" The Northern Confederacy will be handed over to Lincoln, Seward & Co. All these parties are leagued together to compass Lincoln's election; then the Southern disunionists supporting Douglas and Bell will raise the banner of disunion, and *then* these Confederacies are to be formed! This is the plot. It was to this end that the Douglas Executive Committee made haste to denounce all attempts to bring together the conservative vote of the country against Mr. Lincoln! It was to this end that Mr. Douglas himself proclaimed no fusion—no coalition, no union with the friends of Mr. Breckinridge! This infamous conspiracy ought to arouse the patriotism of the country to most superhuman efforts to overthrow and thwart it. Let the true Union men rally to the rescue—rally around the beleaguered flag of the Union and the Constitution, now so gallantly waving in the hands of the gifted and intrepid Kentuckian, and with "linked shields and dauntless steps, follow it to its noblest victory!"

I think it must be admitted that we all told the people of North Carolina in the late canvass we were for the Union, and that it was not to be broken up if Lincoln was elected. Is there any good reason why we should change our position? I believe that so far as the North is concerned, the prospect for the full recognition of Southern rights is better than it was at the time of Lincoln's election, or at any time within several years before. The Governors of several Northern States, including the great States of New York and Pennsylvania, have recommended the faithful observance of all the laws intended for the protection of slave property, and the repeal of all the personal liberty

bills, and no man who is an attentive observer of events can fail to see that a re-action is going on in the northern mind. I have not the slightest doubt, that if the presidential election could be reconsidered to-morrow, Lincoln would be defeated by an overwhelming majority. Let us then stand firmly on the position we took before our constituents. I am not prepared to yield that ground. I intend to breast the storm and battle for a Constitutional Union as long as there is the faintest ray of hope. I know it is the custom of South Carolina and her imitators to taunt those who are unwilling to sanction their reckless policy, by calling them submissionists. Sir, I am willing to submit to the laws rightfully enacted under the Constitution of my country; but he who asserts that I, or the gallant Union men of all parties with whom I act upon this question, would submit to anything which subverted the rights or compromised the honor of North Carolina, is a slanderer. I am not to be driven from the position I feel it my duty to take by any such artillery, and the man who will, at such a time as this, leave what he may consider the line of patriotic duty through fear of what men may say of him, is a coward, unworthy of the humblest post among the sentinels who guard the ramparts of freedom. And while I am determined to do my duty to the whole country, I yield to no man in devotion to the rights and honor of my State. If the evil must come, if wise and moderate counsels are not to prevail, if the bosom of my country must be bared to the ploughshare of civil war, I pledge myself to gentlemen here and now, when the drum shall beat and the bugle shall sound, and when the roar of the cannon shall mark that Carnage has sat down to his feast, *we* will be found as far advanced against the broken ranks of North Carolina foes as the most fiery spirit among *them*. In the meantime, we do not intend to see ourselves robbed of the heritage our fathers bequeathed to us without an effort to avert the calamity.

But, Mr. Chairman, let us see whether the objects of the authors of the disunion programme, are objects worthy of our pursuit, and whether or not they are sincere. Prudent men do not always accept as pure truth every declaration which politicians make as to their motives; and I am unwilling to take the declarations of the disunionists as to their motives without

investigation. They say their only motive is to get rid of the aggressions of the North. They say the Fugitive slave law is not faithfully executed, and that we cannot have our rights in the Territories, and to redress these grievances, they are going to dissolve the Union. What sort of a remedy for these evils would a dissolution of the Union be? We should then have no Fugitive slave law. The North would be a foreign government, and we would have no sort of claim upon it to return our fugitives. It would be bringing Canada down to the borders of the South. Our slaves would only have to step across the line, and they would be free. In the Union and under the Constitution, we have the right to demand that the unconstitutional enactments of some of the Northern States, in regard to fugitive slaves, shall be treated as nullities, and that the whole force of the government shall be employed to carry into execution the law, and return to us our escaped slaves. The disunionists instead of standing firmly upon the Constitution, and demanding our rights and such guaranties as will insure their full recognition, propose that because our rights have hitherto been imperfectly observed, we shall surrender to our enemies the very charter by which they are secured, as well as the army, the navy, and all the physical and moral power by which they are to be enforced. How is it with regard to the Territories? I believe that soil, climate and production will determine the places into which slavery will go, no matter what line of policy may be adopted. But suppose that this is an error. The Territories are the property of the General Government, and if we secede, go out of the government, of course we relinquish all legal right of property in the Territories as well as all claim to regulate their governments. I think disunion a very inadequate remedy for the grievances complained of, and I am inclined to suspect that the originators of the movement to divide the confederacy have other reasons for their action. South Carolina wishes to get rid of a tariff, throw her port open, and have free trade with all the world, so as to build up a great importing city at Charleston. That may be very advantageous to South Carolina, but how is it to benefit us? Again, although all the Southern States are alike interested in the preservation and protection of the institution of slavery, yet, the interest of the cotton States,

and our interest in that institution, are in one particular diametrically opposite. Our interest in the slave is his price, theirs his labor. We estimate him by what he will bring in market, they value him for the cotton he can produce. We sell slaves, they buy them. It is to our interest that slaves shall be high, it is to their interest that they shall be cheap. Many persons think that to carry out this favorite idea of getting negroes cheap, the cotton States would like to re-open the African slave trade, and we all know how destructive to the value of our slave property such a measure would be. But we are told now that there is nothing of it. Hands are held up in holy horror at the idea that such a charge should be made. But while I believe a majority of the southern people are opposed to renewing that traffic, I am satisfied there are many politicians in the cotton States who desire it. In support of this I call the attention of the committee to the remarks of Mr. Yancy, in reply to Mr. Pryor, made in the Montgomery Convention about two years since. As my friend from Hertford (Mr. Yeates) has kindly handed me the paper, I will read an extract from Mr. Yancey's speech :

"I insist that there should be no more discrimination by law against the slave trade than against the nutmeg trade. Let it be governed by the law of supply and demand alone. If we do not want the negroes, then do not have them ; if we do want them, then we can get them. I think this ought to be governed by that rule.

"But I disagree with my friend from Virginia (Mr. Pryor) as to what would be the effect of any class of persons engaging in this trade. I do not propose to re-establish or re-open the slave trade, but I propose to leave our people free to do just as they please upon this question, and not restrict them by any national law. If any class of capitalists in the South, in New England, or elsewhere, choose to bring a cargo of slaves into a Southern port, that is a right which they ought to be allowed to exercise. Whether they shall sell them or not will depend upon the wants of the community. If we of the South want these negroes, give us the privilege of buying them, whether in Africa, Cuba or Brazil. If we do not want them, then we will not buy them.

"Will this trade depreciate the present value of slaves? I think it is a mistaken idea. It seems to me that the gentleman from Virginia utterly misunderstands the want of the Southern planter, when he seems to think that it was his desire for high prices for slaves. This is a purely Virginia idea. We of Alabama want slaves to be cheap ; we want to buy them, not to sell them. It is a Virginia idea that slaves ought to be high. So the African chief would like to have his barracoons of slaves appraised at \$2,000 each. But we who want to go there and buy them would like to get them at \$50 each. Virginia wants \$1,500 each for her negroes, and we want to get them cheaper. My friend from Virginia does not understand the wants of the Southern planter as to labor. He wants the produce of the labor to sell, not the labor itself. It is the value of the produce that is of interest to him, and not the value of the labor that makes that produce. While every one who wants to sell negroes desires a high price for them, the great mass of the planters who buy them are not interested in the high prices of slaves, but are rather interested in getting them cheap."

I leave gentlemen to draw their own inferences from Mr. Yancey's remarks. But, sir, if the African slave trade is not re-opened, without charging the cotton States with such a design, they can get cheap negroes from the border States. With a hostile anti-slavery country all along our northern frontier, and a constant sense of insecurity in slave property, its owners will sell at any price.

And then, Mr. Chairman, what community of feeling is there between North Carolina and South Carolina upon the subject of the Union? South Carolina has for years been wishing herself out of the Union. A member of her Convention said, the other day, after the secession ordinance had passed, that they had now accomplished what every son of "*Carolina*" had been laboring for during the last thirty years. If she ever loved the Union, she has long since lost that affection. To her the Union is the symbol of all that is hateful. We have been taught in a different school. We have been taught that the existence of the Union was not the cause of our wrongs. We have been taught that although beneath its glorious arches men might work their crimes and plot their treason, the Union itself had only been over us to protect us and shower upon us innumerable blessings. We have been accustomed to regard it as a precious heritage won for us by our ancestors at the price of toil and blood. We have been accustomed to consider this Union as the great temple of liberty, rising in this free land, in glorious proportions, till its lofty spires and princely turrets bathed their shadows in the waters of two oceans, within whose sacred precincts the oppressed of all lands might look for rest and peace; the home of the homeless, the refuge of the wanderer; within whose high halls were niched the statues of Washington, and Green, and Marion, and Henry, the patron saints of liberty's religion, and from whose myriad choristers solemn strains of thankfulness went ever up to God for peace, and freedom, and happiness, the like of which the sun in his circuit beheld in no other clime. Yes, Mr. Chairman, North Carolinians, remembering that Washington said the Union was to be regarded as the palladium of our liberties, have ever revered it, and in this hour of its peril their devotion is steadfast. But in South Carolina it is called the accursed Union. She will shatter the accursed Union, if, like

Sampson, she has to throw her arms about the pillars of the temple, and bury us all in one common ruin. Sir, he who can entertain and deliberately express such a sentiment as that, deserves to take rank in his country's history upon the dark page which holds the names of Aaron Burr and Benedict Arnold.

The gentleman from New Hanover said, South Carolina had, and was entitled to his sympathy. I also sympathise with her as a Southern State, while I regret and condemn her hasty and inconsiderate action. The gentleman also told us that when we were disposed to speak harshly of South Carolina, we should remember that she came to our assistance as far back as 1712, and helped us to fight the Indians. I trust North Carolina has not forgotten that assistance, and that she will continue to remember it gratefully. But, Mr. Chairman, there are also some things which South Carolina ought to remember. When South Carolinians threaten to inflict the greatest personal indignity upon an aged and most respectable citizen of this State, merely because of an expression of opinion, and when they write to the Editor of an influential journal of this State, "we despise you and your cowardly countrymen," they ought to remember that in the days of the revolution, North Carolina's best blood was poured out upon her soil at King's Mountain and the Cowpens to relieve her from British oppression. But, sir, there are States of this confederacy with whom North Carolina has identity of interest and feeling. Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and all the central slave raising and grain producing Southern States, have interests and feelings in common with us, and without taking time to discuss that subject, I do not hesitate to declare, that if there must be a disruption of the Federal Government, I am for a Central Confederacy.

I shall now consider the proposition to call a Convention of the people to consider Federal Affairs. Circumstances might arise where a Convention would be necessary, but I have been, and am still, opposed to the call of a Convention at this time. There is no need of a Convention to stay in the Union. Unless we have made up our minds to go out of the Union, what necessity is there for a Convention? If I agreed with the gentleman from New Hanover, who says, that if the Convention

is called it ought to pass an ordinance declaring the State of North Carolina out of the Union, with or without the co-operation of any other State, then I should need, and very much desire, a Convention. I have considered a Convention part of the disunion machinery which is necessary to force a State from her accustomed orbit, and drive her into another system. It is the door through which we are to walk out. It is the bridge upon which we are to cross the Rubicon. It is the first step which every State that desires the overthrow of the Government has taken. Whatever is necessary to protect us—whatever we need in the Union, can be done by the Legislature; but we cannot dissolve the Union. We cannot sever the ties that bind us to the Constitution of our country. It takes a Convention, the disunionists say, to do that. If we call a Convention, a fierce and exciting canvass follows. Whatever disrespectful and abusive language the wildest fanatics at the North have uttered, will be paraded and repeated to our people as a fair specimen of northern sentiment. The disunion presses of this and other States will pour their streams of poison upon the public mind. All that can arouse passion—all that can excite prejudice—all that can weaken the love of the people for our country—will be at work in our midst. Why, Sir, South Carolina is already endeavoring to infuse into our citizens the spirit which seems to have filled them with a sort of sectional delirium. I hold in my hand a pamphlet which has been extensively circulated in this State, entitled, “The South alone should govern the South.” Along with some arguments in favor of secession, is bundled in it all the most offensive things which Sumner, Lovejoy, Giddings & Co. have uttered for years, carefully collected and compiled for the occasion, intending, doubtless, that southern men shall take what these fanatics and traitors have uttered as the deliberate sentiment of a whole section, and by this means, to enrage the South against the North. Mr. Chairman, if there is one creature in human shape baser than all others, it is the wretch who creeps from house to house to repeat whatever careless or ill-natured remarks he may hear of those he talks to, in order to beget strife and hatred in peaceful communities. Yet, so anxious are some men to kindle the fires of sectional hate in bosoms which ought to glow with an enlarged and liberal patri-

otism, they have not scrupled to make themselves the tale-bearers of the miserable abolitionists I have mentioned. Surely these men never read that sacred text which says, "Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God." There is another reason why, as a Union man, I have distrusted the call of a Convention. Every secessionist in the State, I believe, earnestly desires a Convention. Before the committee on Federal Relations reported to the House, two bills had been printed and laid upon our tables. One was introduced by the Senator from Burke, the other by the Senator from Buncombe. They are both honorable men, doing what they conceive to be their duty in this crisis, I have no doubt. But they have been frank in letting their positions upon the questions of the day be known. I see it reported in the papers that the Senator from Burke, some days ago, declared in the Senate, that in his opinion the hour had arrived when there ought to be a separation of the States of this confederacy. So, too, the gentleman from New Hanover, who so eloquently advocated a Convention in this committee on yesterday, thinks North Carolina ought to secede, with or without the co-operation of any other State. Union men ought to pause and ponder before they adopt the measures of those who think secession ought to be consummated.

But the gentleman from New Hanover asks if we distrust the people? No, I am not afraid of the people. If I feared the people on this question, I should cease to labor or to hope for the perpetuity of our institutions. But the people have placed us here to look after their interests and their rights, and I am willing to take the responsibility of performing that duty, even in this crisis. I am unwilling that the din and roar of the battle we are fighting, shall unnecessarily be carried into the quiet families and peaceful homes of my constituents. I wish to reserve the people as the last rallying point, the last rock of hope. It is among the people that the Ark of the covenant of our liberties is carried. In our political system we diverge from the centre, and find in the great circle outside the politicians and politics, our holiest of holies. I do not wish to invade that sacred circle with our strife, while I can maintain myself here. If I find that I am to be overpowered here—if after making a manly resistance, I shall find the Union forces too weak to cope with

their adversaries, then I will appeal to the people ; then I will take my stand upon the great plain of popular opinion, and shoulder to shoulder with my friends and my neighbors, fight the last great battle for the Union, the Constitution and the preservation of our freedom. The gentlemen from New Hanover says the cost of a Convention will be inconsiderable. There was a different tune sung to me last summer, by those who were opposed to calling a Convention to amend our Constitution ; but if I thought the proposed Convention would tend to restore harmony to the country, I would not count dollars. Believing it would have no such effect, I am unwilling to impose a useless expense upon the people. But, Mr. Chairman, I am much more opposed to the substitute offered by the gentleman from New Hanover, than I am to the original bill. I am opposed to it from the very consideration which it might be supposed would have recommended it to me—that is, that it is an open, unrestricted Convention, in which everything may be considered. If a Convention is to be called to decide whether or not we shall go out of the Union, I want that to be the only issue presented. I do not wish the people's attention to be drawn from the main question by side issues. I do not wish delegates elected to that Convention upon any other than the real issue. I do not wish some returned in favor of ad valorem, some against it; some for a change in the basis of representation, (which I tell gentlemen is irresistible in some counties in the west,) and others opposed to it; others upon an amendment as to the *status* of free negroes, and all having the opportunity to misrepresent the people upon the great issue of Union or disunion. There is danger that the people may be mystified and deceived by such a multiplicity of issues. If we are to take the first step in revolution, if we are to call the proposed Convention, I wish the great issue submitted by itself to the people, and then every man's position upon that issue will be understood by them. I am very much in favor of Ad Valorem taxation. I made it a point in my canvass last summer, but rather than peril the existence of this Union, I am willing to give up Ad Valorem. The preservation of peace and the perpetuity of the Union ought now to be the first and highest aspiration of every patriotic citizen. But I have another objection, much more powerful with me, against the substitute offered by the gentleman from New Hanover. There is no provision in that substitute requir-

ing the action of the Convention to be submitted to the people for ratification or rejection. A great deal is said about the sovereign people in Convention. That is the theory, but in reality it is not the sovereign people in Convention, it is only one hundred and twenty delegates of the sovereign people who meet and act for them. Very honest men may be elected to that Convention, and they may be Union men, but it is possible that after they assemble, extraneous influences may be brought to bear upon them. The spirit rappings may be heard in their hall; sensation movements may be brought to bear upon them. Blood and thunder "extras," from disunion presses, may be circulated among them, and they may swerve from the positions they took before the people. Instances are not wanting where representatives of the people have abandoned the principles upon which they were elected. The Chief Magistrate of this nation, once after his inauguration, abandoned the principles he had advocated, and betrayed those who elected him. Humanity is frail. Man is liable to err, and I am unwilling to trust the questions that are to decide our destiny to one hundred and twenty men, I care not who they are. I will never agree that any Convention shall have the final arbitration of the fate of the people of North Carolina. Never! never!! never!!!

MR. PERSON. Will the gentleman allow me to interrupt him for a moment.

MR. CRUMPLER. Certainly, Sir.

MR. PERSON. I ask the gentleman if he believes the Legislature has the power to limit the action of a Convention of the people or to restrict it in any particular.

MR. CRUMPLER. I believe I coincide with the gentleman from New Hanver as to the abstract question of power, but I think the restriction in the original bill requiring the action of the Convention to be submitted to the people was a wholesome provision, which no delegate to that Convention could, in honor disregard, as I suppose the gentleman from New Hanover thought when he reported that bill and urged its passage before the Christmas holidays. It is true, that under this substitute the Convention might, if it chose, submit its action to the people, but if an ordinance of secession were passed, they might think the exigencies of the times would forbid such a course. The establishment of a provisional government would be necessary—our

defence would have to be looked to, and that question of time spoken of by the gentleman from New Hanover would arise.

MR. PERSON. I have not said I was opposed to submitting the action of the Convention to the people. I stated that I thought the action of the Convention ought to be submitted to the people, unless a question of time should arise.

MR. CRUMPLER. I so understood the gentleman, and I have not charged that he was opposed to submitting the action of the Convention to the people, but if that Convention passes an ordinance of secession, in my opinion, the question of time will be *sure* to arise.

Mr. Chairman, I am in favor of the substitute offered by the gentleman from Alamance, (Mr. Mebane.) I am in favor of a National Convention. We have the right, under the 5th Art. of the Constitution of the United States to make the application for a National Convention, not in a State Convention, but by the Legislature. If we make the application, I have no doubt that Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, New York, Pennsylvania, and other States, in number sufficient, would second the call and insure the assembling of the Convention. It seems to me that the assembling of a National Convention offers more hope for a peaceable and honorable solution of our difficulties than anything else. The gentleman from New Hanover thinks that the only hope is for a re-construction of the Government. He says if all the slave States will withdraw, we can then probably re-construct the Union. Upon the same idea, the only way to save a shattered limb, is at once to amputate it. Or, if a man and his wife quarrels, the first step towards a reconciliation is a decree of divorce. Mr. Cobb, of Georgia, has said that heaven had already pronounced a decree of divorce between the North and the South. I think heaven has had very little to do with the matter. The separation itself, as well as its fruits, will savour more of another country, which shall be nameless here. If all the slave States go out, I have no more hope of a reconstruction of the Union, than I would have of man if his head was cut off. Some of the cotton States want a to dissolve the Union, for the sake of dissolution, and if they can get enough States to go out with them to give them strength and respectability, they will never agree to come back. No Union man ought to deceive himself with the idea of a re-construction. But the gentleman from New Hanover thinks there is no hope of saving the Union, and he refers to the failure of the Congressional Committees to effect a compromise. I am not surprised at the failure in Congress. I concur in the very sensible and patriotic remarks, made some time since by the gentleman from Rockingham, (Mr. Galloway,) upon that subject. The Republicans in Congress have nurtured and encouraged the anti-slavery excitement at the North. That feeling is the child

of these politicians. They owe their place and power to its existence, and it is trusting too much I fear to human nature, especially political human nature, to expect them to yield at once. Reactions in popular opinion, in a crisis like this, must be sought for among the people. A reaction is evidently going on among the people of the North, and I have no doubt that if we can get a National Convention, with delegates fresh from the people assembled, the best results might be looked for. That Convention, feeling the responsibility of preserving or destroying this great republic, and the fate of thirty millions of people depending on its action, would settle our difficulties and restore to us the better days of the republic. We ought to make the effort. I tell gentlemen they can never unite our people in any movement to dismember the Confederacy, until all constitutional means for its honorable preservation are exhausted—until at least one honest effort is made to preserve it. The value of the Union demands that the effort should be made. The horrors of the war that will follow dissolution demand it. Those horrors I shall not attempt to paint. I do not care to speak of that day, when we shall look to every comer as the messenger of evil tidings, of that day when the mother as she hears the wind sigh around her dwelling, and rattle at the casement, will clasp her infant to her bosom in pale dread of the ruffian's touch and the assassin's knife. Each man for himself can better imagine the scenes of those calamitous days than I can portray them, and each one knows that it is no fancy sketch, but unless the tide of revolution is arrested, the horrible picture will soon be drawn in blood, and lighted up with flame. Let us call for a National Convention. Let North Carolina lead in the movement. She is a modest and conservative State, but in the memorable days of 1775, she led in the race of glory, and let her now add to the honor of having laid the corner stone of this great republic, the honor of making the first movement for its preservation. I think the Union can yet be preserved. If we can escape the shipwreck that threatens us, there is hope in the future. Look through the clouds and behold the light that breaks upon the prospect. I can see it. Lincoln's administration is powerless to harm us. Before its close, his party will be scattered into fragments. In the meantime, the conservative element of the country will rally to a common standard, and in another contest achieve the victory. Let us labor for this result, and even if we do fail, and in civil war we are called on to die upon some gory field far from home and kindred, it will not be unpleasant to reflect in the last hour, that we strove to avert the ruin of our country. And if success crowns our efforts, to the latest day of our lives we will enjoy the satisfaction of having contributed our humble assistance in transmitting to posterity the blessings of this great and free government, founded by our fathers.



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